

Once it became clear that Hurricane Katrina would disrupt the education of thousands of students attending universities located along the Gulf Coast, DePaul University opened its doors. As of September 9, DePaul had accepted 150 displaced students.

DePaul has offered special tuition grants to their visiting students, requesting that they make tuition payments to their home university. DePaul has also taken steps to secure additional financial aid for these students.

The students at DePaul have also taken action to help victims of Hurricane Katrina. By September 9, these students had raised more than \$5,000 to purchase supplies to be sent to the Gulf Coast. Many campus groups, including student athletes, Student Leaders Emerging, S.A.V.E., and DePaul chapters of the NAACP and Target Hope, have organized relief efforts. Other DePaul students are exploring ways to assist displaced Gulf Coast residents who have migrated to Chicago after evacuating from their homes.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation is faced with an unprecedented challenge. Caring for the victims of Hurricane Katrina and helping them rebuild their lives will require the dedication of all Americans. I am proud of the efforts of the students, faculty and administration of DePaul University in response to this national tragedy, and of similar efforts in colleges and universities throughout Chicago and across the country.

HONORING EVA HALLER AND COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2005

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a great organization, Counterpart International, and a tireless advocate, Eva Haller.

For 40 years Counterpart International has done extraordinary work, first helping South Pacific countries move from colonialism to independence, and then expanding their efforts to assist the growth of democracy in Africa, Latin America, Eurasia, and around the Caribbean. This global organization's strategy is to engage people in their own communities through education and exchange programs that teach the skills necessary for citizens to strengthen their homeland's independence from within.

Counterpart also brings together and draws upon the support of governments, corporations, and individuals to accomplish this goal. Their approach relies on "smart partnerships" which engage all sectors and benefit all participants. These two principles increase the likelihood of success where other development programs fail.

Another key element in Counterpart's success is my dear friend and constituent Eva Haller. As a board member of Counterpart she has emphasized a focus on women, the environment, and preservation of cultures. She is a passionate and tenacious advocate for all people who need help, be they children, poverty stricken families, or the populations of far off land struggling to become free. With her international outlook she knows that those of us who live in the United States, the wealthiest country in the world, have a special duty

to be generous with our time, money, and cares.

Eva is a tremendous example for us all to live up to and I am proud to recognize the incredible work that she does on her own and with Counterpart International. It is no accident that the organization will honor Eva, among others, at its 40th anniversary benefit reception in New York on September 21. In these trying times there is more and more need for the leadership that Eva and Counterpart International exemplify.

THE POVERTY LEVEL IN OUR NATION IS UNACCEPTABLE—IT IS TIME FOR A CHANGE

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2005

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about poverty in our nation—the harsh reality of which played out painfully for all of the world to see after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast region.

The televised images of hardship, death and despair from New Orleans may have opened the doors to this nation's reservoir of compassion—but something more than a momentary outpouring of conscience will be required to keep those doors from slamming shut again once the television spotlights dim.

Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath revealed the harsh realities of poverty in America. The heartbreaking visions of lost children searching for their families, elderly people trapped in their homes, diabetics suffering without their insulin and corpses floating in the streets have the potential to become a transforming event.

That potential will be realized, however, only if Americans of conscience join together in a national movement to end poverty in America.

Once again, a generation of Americans must find within ourselves the courage, optimism and organizational skills that will allow us to demand an end to the poverty that underscored the New Orleans tragedy—and to make permanent our demand for positive change.

The road toward achieving this goal must begin, as all missions of change begin, in our personal experience as a people. Consider two families who have been transformed by the New Orleans disaster—whom I will call the Jones and Smith families. I am using fictitious names and relaying a blended story to protect their privacy—but quite frankly Mr. Speaker their stories are a common refrain from the Katrina fallout.

Prior to this storm, Mr. and Mrs. Jones lived in public housing with their three children. Neither parent had a high school diploma and—as a result—they lived in a neighborhood surrounded by unemployment and poverty.

If it had not been for Hurricane Katrina, the Jones family might never have met the Smiths, a middle-aged couple who live in an upscale suburban home hundreds of miles away.

The Smiths were haunted by the suffering that they were witnessing on their television screen. Called to take action by their church, they reached out to the Jones family and gave them a place to live in the basement of their home. The impact of their generosity has been profound.

Before the storm and the flood, Mr. Jones had been unemployed due to layoffs at the New Orleans oil refinery where he had worked. Now, one of Mr. Smith's neighbors, a lumber yard supervisor, has given Mr. Jones a job—and the Smiths are helping the Jones family research GED programs that can help them get even better jobs.

Across America, churches and good people like the Smiths are coming together to provide the shelter, warm meals, clothing and other help that will allow many of the survivors of Hurricane Katrina to rebuild their lives. School districts have opened their classrooms to the more than 372,000 students displaced by the storm. Government and non-profit organizations are holding job fairs to help those who have been displaced find employment.

We cannot remake the past, but we can give meaning to the staggering toll of those who have suffered and died as a result of this national tragedy. That is what the Smith family is doing, and they deserve our applause.

Yet, if the debacle in New Orleans is truly to become a "tipping point" that guides this nation toward a more just and humane society, something more than individual acts of compassion will be required.

Consider these facts. In New Orleans before the storm, three out of every ten residents lived below the poverty line—and at least 37 million Americans (including 13 million American children) are now living in poverty nationwide.

In fact, the number of Americans falling into poverty increased again last year for the fourth straight year. While the economy grew 3.8%, median income has remained flat for the fifth straight year at \$44,389. Income inequality is at an all time high with 50.1 percent of income going to the top 20 percent of households—where only the top 5 percent of income earners saw an increase in real income gains in 2004 according to the Economic Policy Institute.

Mr. Speaker, it is an undisputable fact that many of the victims of Hurricane Katrina were victims of poverty and neglect.

However, I believe like many of my colleagues that they should not have to wait for our compassion until another disaster brings with it their televised deaths in our streets.

At the federal level, we must demand that those who now control both the Congress and the White House back up the words of compassion that they speak. That is why I have joined House Minority Leader NANCY PELOSI in urging that the House Republicans set aside their plan to cut the federal budget by \$35 billion to help pay for another \$70 billion tax cut for the rich.

Americans need to know that, while the Republican leadership expresses compassion for this nation's poorest citizens, they are planning to cut \$10 billion from Medicaid, \$9 billion from federal student aid, and additional tens of billions of dollars from the federal food stamp program, public housing assistance, Head Start, public education and job training programs.

As a nation, we can do better than this. Shortly after the New Orleans tragedy touched our Nation, I offered this challenge to the Bush Administration and its allies in the Congress.

"We cannot allow it to be said by history," I declared at a Washington press conference, "that the difference between those who lived and those who died in the great storm and